



My name is Fred Stula and I am the Director of Government Advocacy & Community Affairs for HARC, Inc. I am submitting testimony on behalf of HARC for the Finance, Revenue & Bonding Committee Public Hearing on Monday March 28, 2016. If there are questions regarding my testimony please contact me at 860-218-6089 or fstula@harc-ct.org.

HARC is a community-based nonprofit organization in Hartford founded in 1951, and funded through the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). With a current staff of 356, HARC helps 2,254 individuals with intellectual disability and their families lead lives of quality, inclusion and dignity. HARC is a major provider of clinical and supportive programs that span the entire lifetime: early intervention (Birth-to-Three), family support, respite care, employment and day services, residential, recreation, behavioral health and elderly services. HARC is part of the Safety Net and a partner with the State of Connecticut in providing cost-effective services to individuals with intellectual disability and their families throughout greater Hartford.

This proposal will create a state commission to review the financial affairs of the city of Hartford and take the necessary action to address the city's deficits and restore financial stability including; annual budgeting, financial planning, bonding, collective bargaining, labor contracts, contract renewals, efficiency of operations, financial conditions and needs, the board of education budget and to reopen employee bargaining to revise the current contract.

Section 7 (a) would allow the city to enter into negotiations with (an undetermined number) of the largest tax-exempt organizations in Hartford, based on the value of their owned property, recommended by the commission. Following those negotiations, the commission may make recommendations to the city to impose a levy on each organization representing a percentage of the taxes each organization would have to pay if they were not tax-exempt under the provision of the general statutes.

Please oppose Section 7 (a) of Raised Senate Bill 464- An Act Establishing the Hartford Financial Sustainability Commission. Section 7 (a) would impose tax on many tax-exempt organizations in Hartford, based on the value of their owned property.

HARC is a tax-exempt organization in Hartford that could be impacted by this proposal and threaten the health and well-being of the individuals with intellectual disability and their families that we serve throughout greater Hartford. Our city is in difficult budget times but, balancing the budget by imposing tax on nonprofit community providers like HARC, who serve the region's most vulnerable residents, is not the way. The only way HARC could pay additional taxes would be to cut programs and reduce services.

This municipal tax increase is being proposed at the same time the Governor has announced FY16 rescissions of \$17.2 million to the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and his

proposed midterm budget adjustments cut an additional \$59 million from DDS in FY17. These cuts have continued in the context of 30 years of chronic underfunding for community providers, like HARC, who are funded by DDS to provide core services for our city and state's most vulnerable citizens.

If these cuts are passed or written, HARC will significantly reduce services, lay off staff or even be forced to close. Without the life-sustaining services provided by HARC, 2,254 individuals with intellectual disability and their families will be forced to more costly alternatives such as nursing homes, emergency departments and hospitals.

Please prioritize the needs of individuals with intellectual disability and their families in greater Hartford by;

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In the past, the legislature has proven that it takes the needs and well-being of Connecticut's residents seriously. Please continue to support individuals with intellectual disability as the 2016 session draws to a close, and in future discussions while creating a new biennial budget.

Priorities Matter. People Matter.